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REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the Office Action of October 18, 2006. In the Office Action, claims 1-3, 5, 6, and 8-21 are pending in the Application. Claims 1-3, 5, 6, and 8-21 were rejected. Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8, and 9 were amended. Support for the amendments to claim 1 can be found throughout the specification and at least in Figure 1B. New claims 22 and 23 were added. Reconsideration and allowance of the claims are requested.

The Office Action objected to claims 5, 8, and 9. The dependencies of claims 5, 8 and 9 have been corrected. Withdrawal of the objection is requested.

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8, and 10-20 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Garrison et al. (5,972,030) in view of Campbell et al. (6,358,240). Claims 9 and 21 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Garrison et al. in view of Campbell et al. and further in view of Rhee et al. (6,019,739). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections since the combination of the prior art references must disclose, teach or suggest all of the claim limitations.

Claim 1 has been amended to state that the holder body is configured to hold the annuloplasty ring, the holder body having a first opening for receiving a tip of a handle and a first outer finger gripping surface facing in a first direction. The handle coupling has a second outer finger gripping surface facing in a direction opposed to the first direction and has a second opening that is transversely misaligned with the first opening until the gripping surfaces are squeezed together, sliding the handle coupling relative to the holder body, to release the tip.

Garrison relates to a holder for a cardiac valve prosthesis. Garrison does not disclose, teach or suggest a second opening that is transversely misaligned with the first opening until the gripping surfaces are squeezed together. Garrison also does not disclose, teach or suggest a second outer finger gripping surface facing in a direction that is opposed to the first direction of the first outer finger gripping surface. Garrison also does not disclose, teach or suggest sliding the handle coupling relative to the holder body. Thus, Garrison, does not disclose, teach or suggest all of the claim limitations.

Campbell relates to a pusher-rotator for holding and positioning a heart valve prosthesis.

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Campbell does not disclose, teach or suggest opposed gripping surfaces on a holder body and on a handle coupling. Campbell only discloses opposed gripping surfaces on the same device. Campbell also does not disclose, teach or suggest sliding the handle coupling relative to the holder body. Campbell does not disclose, teach or suggest a second opening that is transversely misaligned with the first opening until the gripping surfaces are squeezed together. Thus, Campbell does not disclose, teach or suggest all of the claim limitations.

Thus, a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been met since all of the claim limitations are not disclosed, taught or suggested. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8, and 10-20 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Garrison in view of Campbell is requested.

Rhee relates to a sizer, and does not supply the deficiencies of Garrison and Campbell. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 9 and 21 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Garrison et al in view of Campbell et al and further in view of Rhee et al is requested.

Neither Garrison, Campbell or Rhee, taken singly or in combination, teach or suggest a second opening that is transversely misaligned with the first opening until the gripping surfaces are squeezed together.

Neither Garrison, Campbell nor Rhee, taken singly or in combination, teach or suggest a sliding the handle coupling relative to the holder body.

If a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any issues concerning this

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communication, please contact Applicant's attorney of record, Hallie A. Finucane at 612-330-0587.

The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

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